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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8551
INFO RUFHEB/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 2454
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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL SCUL SHUM CSCE EFIS NU UR BU US
SUBJECT: BURT CONSULTATIONS: US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: IN HIS FEBRUARY 23 MEETING WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER GOTSEV, ASSISTANT SECRETARY BURT EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE POSITIVE ACTION THE GOB HAD TAKEN TO MEET US DESIRES, PROPOSED FURTHER STEPS TO BE TAKEN AND WARNED THAT GOB ACTIONS IN OTHER AREAS COULD AFFECT EFFORTS TO BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP. GOTSEV RESPONDED WITH A HARDLINE REPLY FROM A POORLY PREPARED SCRIPT WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO APPEAL TO A WIDER AND CONSERVATIVE AUDIENCE IN BOTH SOFIA AND MOSCOW. HE INACCURATELY DESCRIBED US SINS OF OMISSION AND COMMISSION. AMBASSADOR BARRY SUGGESTED HE MEET LATER WITH THE HEAD OF THE FOURTH DEPARTMENT TO CLEAR UP MIS-UNDERSTANDINGS. IN THE END, GOTSEV RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY BURT'S STATEMENT THAT WE WOULD SEEK WAYS TO IMPROVE OUR RELATIONS. THE NEXT STEP IS UP TO THE GOB. END SUMMARY.

2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY RICHARD BURT MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER LYUBEN GOTSEV FEBRUARY 23 FOR BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. BURT WAS ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR BARRY, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY PARLMER, EUR/EEY DEPUTY DIRECTOR KUCHEL AND EMBASSY POLEC CHIEF LATE (NOTETAKER). IN ADDITION TO DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER GOTSEV, VALERI PCHELINTSEV, CHIEF OF THE FMJCTH DEPARTMENT (USA); SVETLA POPOVA, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE FOURTH DEPARTMENT; LIBERT POPOV, US DESK OFFICER; AMBASSADOR KOSTATINOV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF UN AND DISARMAMENT DEPARTMENT FOR DISARMAMENT

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MATTERS; AMBASSADOR STEFAN TODORV, ACTING CHIEF OF THE DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS; A TRANSLATOR AND A NOTETAKER WERE ON THE BULGARIAN SIDE.

3. THE DISCUSSIONS OF US BILATERAL RELATIONS WAS INITIATED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY BURT AT THE END OF THE MORNING SESSION, CONTINUED THROUGH LUNCH AND INTO THE AFTERNOON. BILATERAL RELATIONS WERE ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE CONVERSATION WITH FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER MARI IVANOV REPORTED SEPTEL.

4. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE POSITIVE STES TAKEN BY THE GOB IN THE MONTHS SINCE THE AMBASSADOR'S AUGUST 1 MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ZHIVKOV-- THEATER EXHIBIT, DIVIDED FAMILIES, SUPPORT FLIGHTS, CESSATION OF VOA JAMMING--AND NOTED THE EFFORTS WE HAVE MADE--BUSINESS ROUNTABLE, CODEL GIBBONS, RENEWAL OF FISHERIES AND MARITIME AGREEMENTS. HE SAID THAT THERE CREATED A PLATFORM FOR DOING MORE. IN THE AFTERNOON SESSION BURT SUGGESTED STEPS TO SEEK A GREATER DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES:

- S/P CONSULTATIONS
- NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY VISIT
- CONSULTATIONS ON CSCE QUESTIONS, THE FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE IN PARTICULAR
- MORE EFFORTS ON DIVIDED FAMILIES
- IMPROVED TREATMENT OF THE US IN THE BULGARIAN MEDIA
- GREATER ACCESS BY THE EMBASSY TO GOB OFFICIALS AND BULGARIAN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE
- OPENING OF CLOSED AREAS
- EXPANDED CULTURAL EXCHANGES AND NEGOTIATION OF A CULTURAL AGREEMENT.

HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THE PRESIDENT'S JANUARY 16 SPEECH, THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT IN STOCKHOLM AND THE VICE PRESIDENT'S REMAKRS IN MOSCOW AS DEMONSTRATING OUR DESIRE TO TONE DOWN THE RHETORIC.

NICARAGUA AND NARCOTICS

5. IN A BROADER CONTEXT BURT NOTED THAT BULGARIAN ACTIONS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD SUCH AS NICARAGUA HAD IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. THE USG DOES NOT HAVE A MECHANISTIC APPROACH TO LINKAGE, BUT THERE IS LINKAGE BY VIRTURE OF OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM. INITIALLY, GOTSEV WAS SURPRISINGLY DEFENSIVE ON THE QUESTION OF NICARAGU AYING THAT THE GOB WOULD ABIDE BY ITS TREATIES WITH CERTAIN COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, IN THE AFTERNOON HE SAID THAT IF HE REPORTED TO HIS MINISTER THAT US RELATIONS WERE PRECONDITIONED ON BULGARIAN "BEHAVIOR," HE WOULD PROBABLY BE PROHIBITED FROM MEETING WITH US AGAIN.

6. AT LUNCH THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY, AND AMBASSADOR, NOTED THAT BULGARIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN NARCOTICS WAS A SERIOUS MATTER FOR OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. THEY EXPRESSED OUR UNHAPPINESS WITH THE LIMITED VIEW THE GOB HAD TAKEN OF ITS LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND POINTED OUT THAT THE PRESENCE OF SMUGGLERS IN SOFIA AS WELL AS THE INVOLVEMENT OF KINTEX IN SMUGGLING MUST BE KNOWN TO THE GOB. GOTSEV RESPONDED BY ASKING AGAIN FOR INFORMATION ON THIS QUESTION WHICH WE PROMISED TO PROVIDE.

GOTSEV

7. RESPONDING TO THE US AGENDA, GOTSEV WAS CLEARLY PERFORMING FOR AN AUDIENCE BEYOND THE CONFERENCE TABLE. HE NOTED THE 1981 EAGLEBURGER VISIT IN WHICH IT WAS ENVISIONED THAT BULGARIAN-US RELATIONS WOULD DEVELOP WITHIN

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A FRAMEWORK BASED ON US-BULGARIAN INTERESTS AND DIFFERENCES. HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN A DETERIORATION IN THE CLIMATE FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS. CITING THE PRESIDENT'S LONDON SPEECH, THE SECRETARY'S REMARKS ON BULGARIA HARBORING TERRORISTS AND VICE PRESIDENT BUSH'S VIENNA SPEECH. HE SAID THAT THE US REFERRED TO BULGARIA IN THE HARSHEST TERMS. HE NOTED THAT THE GOB WAS A MEMBER OF THE WARSAW PACT AND WOULD NOT BE DICTATED TO BY ANYONE.

7. WITH REFERENCE TO THE AGENDA OF US INTERESTS HE INCORRECTLY SAID THAT THE CLOSED AREAS WERE BASED ON RECIPROCITY; NOTED THAT THE AMBASSADOR HAD ENJOYED UNUSUAL ACCESS TO HIGH LEVEL INDIVIDUALS; CLAIMED INCORRECTLY THAT ZHULEV HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO SEE THE ACTING SECRETARY TO DELIVER THE SOFIA WARSAW PACT COMMUNIQUE; CITED THE KOSTADINOV CASE ("WHICH WAS DISCUSSED IN GREAT DETAIL YESTERDAY") AND THE ANTONOV CASE AS HAVING A NEGATIVE IMPACT; AND SAID THAT TRADE WOULD DEVELOP NATURALLY-THE GOB DOES NOT WANT ANY SPECIAL TREATMENT. HE ALSO SAID THE GOB WAS NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT A VISIT BY THE NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY.

8. SPEAKING OF BULGARIAN PROBLEMS IN OTHER AREAS HE CLAIMED THAT THE GOB HAD BEEN DENIED PERMISSION TO OPEN A CONSULAR OFFICE IN LOS ANGELES FOR THE OLYMPICS (A REQUEST UNKNOWN TO THE US SIDE); HAD BEEN DENIED PERMISSION TO OPEN A BRANCH TRADE OFFICE IN SAN FRANCISCO (5 YEARS AGO); AND HAD BEEN GIVEN INADEQUATE FISHING QUOTAS. HE DISMISSED THE POSITIVE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE GOB AS "COSMETIC." HOWEVER, HE THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE GOB IS "EAGER" TO DO BIGGER THINGS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP, BUT OFFERED NO SUGGESTIONS.

9. ASSISTANT SECRETARY BURT NOTED THE INACCURACIES IN GOTSEV'S STATEMENTS AND POINTED OUT THAT GOTSEV WAS SCRAPING THE BOTTOM OF THE BARREL TO MAKE ACCUSATIONS. HE SAID HE REFUSED TO BE PESSIMISTIC AND DEFENSIVE; RATHER, HE WISHED TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE AND THINK OF WHAT CAN BE DONE. GOTSEV, FLUSTERED, SAID THAT THERE WERE FACTS BEHIND HIS STATEMENTS, BUT WENT ON TO SAY HE AGREED WE HAVE TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE AND HE EXPRESSED THE DESIRE TO HAVE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATIONS.

10. AMBASSADOR BARRY EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT INSTEAD OF SUGGESTING NEW WAYS TO IMPROVE OUR RELATIONSHIP AS HE HAD URGED, THE BULGARIAN SIDE HAD BROUGHT UP PAST PROBLEMS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS. HE SUGGESTED THAT HE AND MR. PCHELINTSEV MEET TO CLEAR UP THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

LOOKING AHEAD

11. ASSISTANT SECRETARY BURT NOTED THAT USG INTERESTS WERE SUBJECT TO INTERPRETATION. IF THE GOB CHOSE TO INTERPRET OUR INTERESTS AS AN UNWARRANTED INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, THAT WAS THEIR RIGHT, BUT IT WAS NOT WHAT HE WAS SAYING. WE SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT OUR PERSPECTIVES ARE DIFFERENT. WE SHOULD NOT BE DIPLOMATS READING TALKING POINTS, RATHER STATESMEN SEEKING REASONABLE WAYS TO AVOID CONFLICTS.

12. GOTSEV RESPONDED THAT HE AGREED WITH THIS PERSPECTIVE, AND THERE WERE POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE.

13. COMMENT: GOTSEV WAS READING FROM A PREPARED SCRIPT, AND POORLY PREPARED AT THAT. HE DID HIS DUTY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE NAY SAYERS WITHIN THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT, BUT THE DOOR WAS LEFT OPEN FOR FUTURE DISCUSSIONS ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. OUR AGENDA IS ON THE TABLE, THE

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NEXT STEP IS UP TO THE GOB.BARRY

END OF MESSAGE

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